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Do Ethical Practices Influence Job Performance After Mergers And Acquisitions In Indian Public Sector Banks?

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Abstract:
***Purpose* -** The study aims to examine the influence of ethical practices; organisational justice caring practices, employment security on job performance in selected Indian public sector banks after M&As.
***Research Methodology* –** Exploratory cum descriptive research design was used in the study. The questionnaire was administered to 325 employees from SBI and PNB. Impact of ethical practices; organisational justice, caring practices, and employment security on job performance was examined by applying multiple regression technique through SPSS (version 26).
***Findings* -** There is a positive relationship of organisational justice with job performance ($r = 0.596$), caring practices with job performance ($r = 0.516$) and employment security with job performance ($r = 0.620$). 66% variance in dependent variable is explained by the predictors, *i.e.,* organisational justice, caring practices and employment security.
***Research Limitations* -** This study is limited to a sample size of 325 respondents. The information was gathered from the employees of SBI and PNB only.
***Practical Implications* -** The findings of the study will give an edge to the top-level managers of public sector banks to look into the issue of negatively perceived ethical practices among employees due to which have influence on the job performance of the employees of the selected banks after M&As.
***Originality/value* -** This study examined the relationship and influence of above-mentioned variables ethical practices on job performance for the first time on the employees of Indian public sector banks.
Keywords: Public sector banks; Organisational justice; Employment security; Caring practices, Job performance.
Paper type: Research paper

1. Introduction:

Ethics and ethical dilemmas have become important among businesses in the whole world. The word "ethos" is the root of the philosophical term "ethics" from Greek language, which simply means right or wrong rather than good or bad (Sims, 1992). Organisational ethics can be defined as the standards of behaviour that employees are expected to uphold, which promote honesty and integrity and discourage behaviours motivated only by self-interest. Religions, civilisations, and philosophical ideas all have a long history of teaching and studying ethics (Lewis, 1985). Promoting ethical practices within organizations facilitates the acceptance of moral principles such as equality, justice, and human rights among individuals. Marketing, information management, labour relations, and human resource management have all given a lot of attention to business ethics, but it is still not widely studied (Lin & Wei, 2006). The longer someone works for an organisation, the more they prioritise job security, which can lead to rationalising or disregarding immoral behaviour. More emphasis on internal behaviour is required, with a focus on the impact of exterior behaviour on interior behaviour of employees (Mitchell et al., 1992). Country's economy is exclusively dependent on the banking sector; hence ethical procedures are much more important in this sector (Kour, 2020). Since the goal of banking activities is to produce value for bank clients, banking ethics are more crucial than ever because they support maximum long-term value (Musa, 2015). Taking care of ethical practices while doing mergers and acquisitions of banks is very important. In essence, the ethical framework governing banking practices ought to advance principles of justice alongside caring ethics, which collaboratively endeavour to comprehend the viewpoints of the other contractual party, rather than merely executing the requisite banking responsibilities. (Miller et al., 2019). Garavan & McGuire (2010) proposed that to guarantee that employees carry out their job responsibilities in an ethical manner, organisations should implement several tactics such as creating an ethics code and providing ethics training. With significant influence over the complex web of financial markets and systems, the banking industry is a key component of global economic stability and expansion (Allioui & Mourdi, 2023). Maintaining strong ethical standards is becoming more and more important as this industry changes to suit the expectations of a globalised society. In banking and finance, ethical issues are more than just following the law; they are ingrained in every aspect of the sector, including client relations, corporate governance, risk management, and social responsibility (Svetlova, 2022, Khaleel et al., 2022). For the long-term success of the organisation, timely measuring the perception of the employees towards the ethics and ethical practices followed by the organisation is important so that timely corrective actions can be taken.

Hence, the present study is undertaken to analyse the impact of ethical practices; organisational justice, caring practices and employment security on job performance in Indian public sector banks.

The remaining portions of the study are arranged as follows: the theoretical framework, literature review and hypotheses development are discussed in the second section. The research methods and estimation techniques are discussed in the third section. Results are covered in the fourth section. Section five explained the conclusion of the results. The study's and implications are discussed in the sixth section. In section seven, the directions for future research are explained.

Study's Context: Mergers and Acquisitions in Indian Banking Sector

Over the past few decades, mergers and acquisitions (M&As), which is frequently employed as a tool to achieve synergies and corporate growth (Feldman & Hernandez, 2022), have increased at an unparalleled rate. Over the past 30 years, even the international banking structure has experienced an unheard-of transformation. Particularly, horizontal mergers and acquisitions (M&A), or partnerships between businesses operating in the same industry, have grown significantly in popularity (Rahman & Lambkin, 2015). The concept of M&As isplaying important role in improving the competitiveness and growth of the companies. M&As are the instances of change that may have an effect on employees' attitude, behaviour, and subsequent performance in an organisation (Cartwright & Cooper, 2016). Mergers take place due to industry shock including economic, technological, and regulatory changes which leads to combined assets at large level (Harford, 2005). There is emerging evidence, meanwhile, that companies don't always make money after M&A activity. Additionally, M&A can have a negative effect on the firm's stakeholders and destroy value (Rahman & Lambkin, 2015). Academics have shown a significant lot of interest in theoretical and empirical studies on mergers (Yaghoubi et al., 2016).

The banking industry plays a special role in the growth of a country's economy. Deregulation, market liberalisation, and economic reforms are few reasons that have boosted competition in the banking sector. Banks have been pushed by the escalating rivalry to work tirelessly to maintain their financial stability and dominate the market. Enterprises may develop more swiftly than their rivals thanks to mergers and acquisitions (M&A), which also ensure that weaker enterprises are quickly absorbed (Shrestha et al., 2017). The General Bank of India and the Bank of Hindustan were established the beginning of Indian banking in the 18th century. The first Indian bank in the Indian financial system was the Bank of Hindustan, which was established in 1770 (Goyal & Joshi, 2011). Later, Imperial Bank (which later became State Bank of India in 1955) was founded in 1921 as a result of the amalgamation of three banks namely Bank of Madras, Bank of Bombay and Bank of Calcutta (Meena & Kumar, 2014). The growth of Indian banking sector can be divided into two periods: the pre-liberalisation era and the post-liberalisation era. Prior to financial deregulation, on July 19, 1969, the Indian government nationalised 14 banks and six more commercial banks on April 15, 1980. The government combined the New Bank of India and the Punjab National Bank in 1993; this was the only union of nationalised banks. As a result, the number of nationalised banks became 19 instead of 20. The government followed a liberalisation strategy and issued licences to private banks during the post-liberalisation era, which fuelled the growth of the Indian banking sector (Khan, 2011).

The Government of India (GOI) carried out a restructuring process in recent years by merging 13 PSBs into five. The specifics of this merger were not disclosed to the public. However, it was widely believed that the primary goal was to eliminate the frequent need for recapitalisation of these banks, which had become necessary due to their declining financial condition and subsequent capital erosion (Sharma & Dhiman, 2023). State bank of India (SBI) is the largest Indian PSB which have a significant market share. The State banks group (SBG), which includes SBI and its associates, has witnessed numerous mergers in the past decade, including a major merger in 2017 when five associates of the SBG were merged into State Bank of India (Kaur & Aggarwal, 2023). During the period 2017-2020, the GOI merged the subsidiaries of SBI and Bhartiya Mahila Bank (BMB) into SBI, however Oriental Bank of Commerce and United Bank of India merged into Punjab National Bank and amalgamated 13 PSBs to create five big banks. SBI holds the top position among PSBs in terms of market capitalisation, boasting over 5.4 trillion Indian rupees as of December 2023. In the same year, PNB held the second position (Statista Research Department, 2023). Hence, research focused on the employees working at SBI and PNB.

2. Literature Review and hypotheses development

2.1 Theoretical lens: Social exchange theory

From the standpoint of social exchange theory, the theoretical basis for employees' perception in Indian PSBs on organisational justice, caring practices, employment security and job performance after M&As is being investigated. Social exchange describes human behaviour that is driven by the expected rewards. Therefore, this is predicated on a long-term exchange of favours based on a commitment to return the favour (Blau, 1964). Central assumption of social exchange theory is that connections develop through time into dependable, reciprocal commitments, and that parties must abide by specific exchange norms, notably the principle of reciprocity, as these relationships develop (Gouldner, 1960). Theoretically, the employer should provide job security and fair treatment, and employees should reciprocate by having faith in senior leadership and a strong sense of loyalty to organisation they work for. According to the social exchange theory, job security and fair treatment are essential for employees to be committed to the organisation (Jeon, 2009). Employees render services in return for the transactional commitments of compensation, secure employment, safe working conditions, and mutual respect and support between the employee and the employer. Cognitively, the emotional ties are severed when workers believe the organisations, they work for no longer offer these supports. In such cases, employee may leave or their productivity may reduce. As a result, low productivity will impact the organisational commitment and performance of employees at the workplace (Lin & Wei, 2006). Although numerous studies have been conducted in different sectors on ethical practices but few of them have attempted to examine the links with job performance. There is a lack of evidence in Indian public sector banks after M&As, especially on the viewpoint of the employees on organisational justice, caring practices and employment security. As far as India is concerned, the library search revealed that there are no studies in this field.

2.1 Hypotheses development

2.2.1 Job performance

Job performance constitutes a pivotal and impactful element in the domain of human resource management within an organisational context. It is imperative for the supervision and assessment of employees' execution of their responsibilities, which has a direct bearing on the overall efficacy and productivity of the organisation (Choi et al., 2018). Empirical studies consistently emphasise job performance as a fundamental aspect across both public and private sectors, highlighting its significance in achieving organisational success. Task performance refers to the degree of effectiveness with which employees fulfil the tasks and responsibilities mentioned in their job descriptions. High level of task performance enhances the organisation's technical competencies by ensuring that technical protocols are executed accurately (Uraon & Gupta, 2020).

Favourable job performance is typically correlated with a positive appraisal of job attributes. This indicates that when employees exhibit high performance levels, it frequently results in a more favourable evaluation of various dimensions of their jobs, including job satisfaction and role fulfilment (Johari et al., 2019). Historically, job performance has been shaped by internal and external determinants such as promotions, salary increments, job status, and acknowledgment (Vuong et al., 2023). These determinants can profoundly influence how employees conceptualise their roles and the resultant performance outcomes. It is paramount across different industries, with multiple factors exerting an influence on it. For instance, the work environment and organisational commitment are crucial for improving job performance (Ramli & Mariam, 2020). A supportive and developmental workplace culture has the potential to improve productivity, whereas a strong commitment to organisational values can motivate personnel to improve their performance level.

2.2.2 Ethical practices

a) Organisational justice

It is a well-established consensus among scholars and practitioners that a human-centered organisational environment is characterised by its unwavering commitment to fair treatment at workplace. This perception of equity within the organisational setting significantly enhances the relationship between employees and the organisation, creating an environment that encourages engagement, satisfaction, and productivity (Kumasey & Hossain, 2021). The concept of organisational justice arises from social psychology that examines how individuals interpret fairness in an organisational context (Al-Douri, 2020). It comprises as the perceived fairness of processes, behaviour, and outcomes within the organisational framework (Al-Douri, 2020). Theorists contend that the concept of justice includes many dimensions such as distributive, procedural, interactional (interpersonal and informational) justice (Colquitt et al., 2001; Colquitt et al., 2013). A positive correlation has been observed between organisational justice and job performance, organisational justice and job satisfaction, job performance and caring climate, as well as caring climate and organisational justice (Sembiring et al., 2020).

b) Employment security

Job security refers to psychological condition wherein employees exhibit different degrees of anticipation regarding the persistence of their employment within an organisation (Loi et al., 2011), has attracted increased examination within the academic fields of psychology and management. While a substantial body of research has emerged investigating the influence of perceived job security on employee performance metrics (Sverke et al., 2002; Reisel et al., 2010), comparatively less scholarly focus has been directed towards this phenomenon in the context of mergers and acquisitions within the banking sector.

Employees who perceive a substantial degree of job security exhibit greater certainty regarding the continuity of their employment, as well as enhanced predictability and control concerning their future (De Witte, 1999). According to the principles of social exchange theory, employees demonstrate a propensity to exert considerable effort and enhance their performance in order to reciprocate the benevolence of employers who provide them with stable employment opportunities. Conversely, job insecurity constitutes a significant obstacle that detracts from an individual's work performance (Staufenbiel & König, 2010). When individuals are concerned regarding their employment status, they often experience heightened pressure and may opt to disengage from the work environment by diminishing both in-role and extra-role behaviour. Prior research has consistently established a positive correlation between job security and work performance (Cheng & Chan, 2008; Reisel et al., 2010). King (2000) discovered that white-collar workers who experienced feelings of job insecurity exhibited a diminished willingness to advocate on behalf of the organisation. Employing a meta-analytic approach, Cheng & Chan (2008) substantiated that job insecurity exerted a negative influence on work performance.

c) Caring practices

Employees' interpretations of supportive occupational resources and care significantly influence their emotional attitudes towards their organisation. For example, occupational demands, such as excessively high production goals, can influence employees' perceptions of their employers' regard and concern for their well-being, particularly in instances where there is a perceived that there is lack in both formal and informal support systems to meet these objectives (Liao, 2011).

Existing studies have clearly demonstrated a strong connection between employees' feelings of care and goodwill from their employers and supervisors and their degree of commitment to the organisation. When employees genuinely sense that their organisation values and cares for them, it cultivates a feeling of loyalty and connection, thereby enhancing their commitment to the organisation. This connection has been evidenced in numerous studies indicating that the care and goodwill exhibited by leadership are essential elements in fortifying employees' emotional and affective bonds to their workplace (Kehoe & Wright, 2013).

when employees perceive their supervisors and organisation as supportive and compassionate, they are likely to show elevated levels of organisational commitment. Such positive perceptions can result in heightened job satisfaction, a greater inclination to engage in extra-role behaviours, and improved overall job performance. Research indicates that these supportive interactions encourage stronger emotional connections between employees and their organisation, thereby motivates them to contribute and remain with the company (Morrow, 2011). Nonetheless, there exists a notable gap in research regarding how these dynamics specifically studied within the context of mergers and acquisitions (M&As). Although the overall relationship between care, goodwill, and organisational commitment is well-established, the challenges associated with M&As may influence these dynamics. For instance, during M&As, employees may face uncertainty and stress, which can affect their perceptions of care and goodwill for the organisation. The impact of these perceptions on organisational commitment after M&As has not been thoroughly investigated (Park et al., 2014).

Empirical research indicates that when employees perceive their organisation's practices as lacking in support or inadequate, it may result in feelings of being overwhelmed, disheartened, or even sceptical towards their organisation, as they struggle to effectively cope with the demands associated with their roles (Duong et al., 2015). Employee care constitutes an informal occupational resource that pertains to employees' perceptions of their managers or supervisors as exhibiting concern, demonstrating a willingness to engage in active listening, addressing their issues with attentiveness, and administering fair treatment (Parker & Hyett, 2011). It has statistically significant positive effect on work engagement and organisational commitment. Nevertheless, it was determined that employee care exerted a more pronounced impact on both outcome variables compared to organisational respect (Kotzé & Nel, 2020). Through the demonstration of concern for the welfare of employees, the appreciation of their contributions, and the provision of support for their professional advancement, managers are fostering an environment characterised by support and care (Paterson et al., 2014).

Present study aims to check the relationship of ethical practices; organisational justice and employment security, caring practices with job performance in public sector banks and to examine the impact of ethical practices; organisational justice, employment security and caring practices on the job performance of employees in public sector banks.

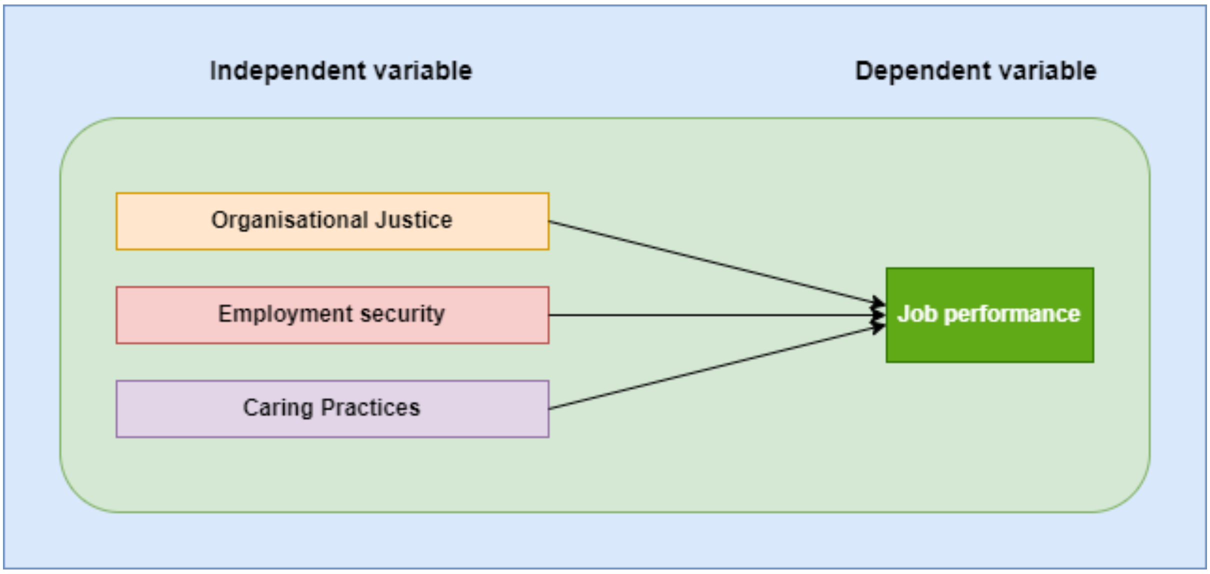

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study

The hypotheses are articulated as follows:
H_1: Ethical practices are significantly correlated with job performance.
H_{1a}: Organisational justice significantly correlated with job performance.
H_{1b}: Employment security significantly correlated with job performance.
H_{1c}: Caring practices significantly correlated with job performance.
H_2: There is significant influence of ethical practices on job performance.
H_{2a}: Organisational justice significantly influences the job performance.
H_{2b}: Employment security significantly influences the job performance.
H_{2c}: Caring practices significantly influences the job performance.

3. Methodology

This section discusses the statistical methodology employed to examine the influence of ethical practices on job performance, alongside sample characteristics, data distribution patterns, and sample size. The investigation adopted an exploratory cum descriptive research design, wherein data were gathered from 325 employees of State Bank of India and Punjab National Bank. Data were collected through well-structured questionnaire which is distributed after confirming the preferences and availability of the participants. Before starting the data collection, ethical considerations were taken into consideration that information will be used for academic purposes only. The questionnaire presented to the respondents was designed to collect the relevant data regarding perception on ethical practices and their influence on employee performance. The questionnaire was designed on five-point Likert scale to elicit insights on dimensions of ethical practices, including organisational justice, caring practices, and employment security. Specifically, the questionnaire includes closed-ended to procure quantitative data from the respondents. Closed-ended questions on five-point Likert scale facilitated the collect of structured data, thereby enabling statistical analyses through statistical techniques such as correlation and regression analysis. Correlation was used to check the relationship of the independent variables with dependent variables and regression analysis was used to check the influence of independent variables on dependent variable.

Regression equation:

$$Y = \beta 0 + \beta 1X1 + \beta 2X2 + \beta 3X3 + \beta 4X4 + \beta 5X5 + \beta 6X6 + \beta 7X7 + \beta 8X8 + \beta 9X9 + \beta 10X10 + \beta 11X11,$$

where Y is job performance, βo is a constant, X1 is organisational justice, X2 is employment security, X3 is caring practices, E is SD, β1, β2, β3,…, β11 are coefficients.

4. Results and Discussion

Reporting of Demographic Profile

As described in Table 1, out of 325 respondents, the respondents aged 25 and above had the highest percentage. 235 (72.30%) are male and 90 (27.70%) are female. Majority of them are less than 10 years of experience (52.90%), and graduates (57.80%). 185 employees have income between the range of Rs.50000-100000, and most of the employees

(62.20%) belong to urban area.

Reporting of Correlation and Regression

Table 2 shows the results of Pearson correlation. To indicate how the respondents responded to the question, a descriptive analysis was performed. The correlation coefficient offers a way to gauge the degree of relationship. The goal of this study is to analyse the impact of ethical practices on job performance, which was estimated through regression analysis. Pearson correlation using SPSS is one of the statistical methods used to analyse the data. A well-known method of determining the relationship between variables is Pearson correlation. The Pearson coefficient expresses the strength of the relationship between the variables under study. The correlation coefficient offers a way to gauge the degree of relationship. The dependent variable and all other independent variables have a positive relationship. At a 95% confidence level, the association have been explained. At the 0.01 level of confidence or 95% of the time, there is a significant association between the variables.

Table-1: Demographic Profile

Demographics		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	235	72.30
	Female	90	27.70
Age (Years)	Below 25	79	24.30
	25 and above	246	75.70
Monthly Income (₹)	Up to 50000	54	16.60
	50000-100000	185	56.90
	Above 100000	86	26.50
Residential Status	Urban	202	62.20
	Semi-Urban	74	22.80
	Rural	49	15.10
Education	Graduation	188	57.80
	Post-Graduation	129	39.70
	Any other	8	2.5
Work Experience	0-10 years	172	52.90
	10 years and above	153	47.10
Designation	Clerk	81	24.90
	Manager	97	29.80
	Deputy Manager	60	18.50
	Specialist Officer	30	9.20
	Probationary Officer	19	5.80
	Any other	38	11.70
Name of the Bank	State Bank of India	154	47.40
	Punjab National Bank	171	52.60

Source: Author's own (N=325)

At a 95% confidence level, ethical practices have an impact on job performance, which helps to explain the high correlation between the two. The findings indicate that organisational justice, caring practices, and employment security each demonstrate a moderate positive correlation with job performance (r = 0.596, $p < .001$), (r = 0.516, $p < .001$), (r = 0.620, $p < .001$) respectively, suggesting that improvements in these ethical dimensions are likely to enhance employee performance to a discernible extent. Organisational justice, which involves equitable treatment and transparent decision-making processes, fosters a climate of fairness and trust among employees, thereby contributing to increased motivation and enhanced job performance. Caring practices, characterised by genuine concern for the well-being of employees and support for their personal and professional goals, significantly contribute to the development of a more committed and engaged workforce. Similarly, employment security, by providing assurance and stability regarding one's job, reduces stress and improves focus, thus leading to enhanced job performance. While the correlation is moderate, indicating that these factors are influential but not the sole determinants of job performance, their positive impact underscores the essential need to cultivate a fair, supportive, and secure work environment to improve overall productivity of the employees. Hence, H_1 includes H_{1a}, H_{1b}, H_{1c} are accepted.

To explain the variance and causal connection between the independent and dependent variables, regression analysis is performed. Table 3 provides the regression coefficients for the independent variables. The regression analysis revealed that ethical practices have positive impact on the job performance of employees. Table 4 illustrates job performance as the dependent variable within the framework of the model's regression analysis. The R-squared (R^2) statistic is found to be 66.5%, whereas the adjusted R^2 is approximately 44.2%. Larger R values denote stronger correlation. Table 5 enumerates the results of the variance analysis. The statistical significance of the overall model is demonstrated by its F value, which indicates that the independent variables can forecast variations in the dependent variable.

Table 2: Pearson correlation

Correlations	Organisational Justice	Caring Practices	Employment Security	Job Performance
Organisational Justice	1			
Caring Practices	.658**	1		
Employment Security	.680**	.702**	1	
Job Performance	.596**	.516**	.620**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

At the 0.01 threshold of significance, Table 3 contains one constant, which is 6.985, as well as the regression coefficients for the slope and Y-intercept, 0.245, 0.047, and 0.341, respectively.

Table 3: Coefficient

	Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	6.985	0.939		7.436	0.000
OJ	0.245	0.048	0.308	5.083	0.000
CP	0.047	0.059	0.050	0.801	0.423
ES	0.341	0.058	0.375	5.854	0.000

The outcomes of the regression analysis indicate that organisational justice and employment security exert a significant and positive influence on job performance, whereas caring practices fails to demonstrate a statistically significant effect. The intercept of the regression model is 6.985, which denotes the foundational level of job performance when all independent variables are held at zero. Organisational justice is characterised by an unstandardised coefficient of 0.245 and a standardised Beta of 0.308, accompanied by a notable t-value of 5.083 ($p < 0.001$), thereby evidencing a substantial positive correlation with job performance. Similarly, employment security is found to exert a positive impact on job performance, as indicated by an unstandardised coefficient of 0.341 and a standardised Beta of 0.375, further corroborated by a t-value of 5.854 ($p < 0.001$). In contrast, caring practices, which presents an unstandardised coefficient of 0.047 and $\beta = 0.050$, reveals an insignificant t-value of 0.801 ($p = 0.423$. Collectively, these findings depict that while organisational justice and employment security are integral for the improving the job performance, whereas caring practices do not contribute significantly in this context. Hence, hypothesis $H_{2a,}$ H_{2b} are accepted and H_{2c} is rejected.

Results indicates that both organisational justice and employment security play an important role in improving job performance, suggesting that fair treatment and employment security are essential for promoting employees' efficacy in their roles. This implies that organisations should prioritise fair treatment and environment, as well as job security, to enhance performance of the bankers. Conversely, caring practices, which pertain to the support of employees' well-being, exert an insignificant influence. It suggests that, although caring practices are important for the overall satisfaction and well-being of employees, they may not directly impact job performance as effectively as fair treatment and employment security. In summary, the findings highlight the significance of fairness and job security in the workplace, indicating that these elements serve as fundamental determinants of job performance.

Table 4: Model

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.665	0.442	0.437	2.34604

a. Predictors: (Constant), OJ, CP, ES

Table 5: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1398.978	3	466.326	84.727	.000[b]
Residual	1766.749	321	5.504		
Total	3165.727	324			

Note: a. predictors; (constant) Organisational justice, caring practices, and employment security. b. Dependent variable; job performance.

5. Conclusion

This investigation underscores the importance of ethical practices; organisational justice and employment security in increasing job performance within public sector banks after M&As. All the three ethical practices exhibit a moderate positive correlation with job performance, and the regression analysis shows their considerable influence. Organisational justice, which entails equitable treatment, along with employment security, which ensures job stability, are important in increasing employee performance. These results underscore that fair treatment and job stability are crucial for motivating and engaging employees, consequently increase their job performance. Conversely, although caring practices - such as offering support and expressing concern for employees' welfare - also indicate a positive correlation with job performance, however there is a lack of statistically significant effect in this particular context. This implies that, while integral to overall employee satisfaction, caring practices do not have any direct influence on job performance to the same degree as organisational justice and employment security within the public sector banks after M&As.

6. Implications

The findings of this investigation present several significant implications for public sector banks after M&As. Findings supports to the fact that cultivating an atmosphere of fairness and transparency, banks can markedly improve productivity and performance of the employees. Furthermore, the prioritisation of employment security is essential. Employees' perception that their job is secure can mitigate stress and increase their confidence, which helps in improving their performance at workplace.

While caring practices are critical for fostering a supportive organisational culture, the research suggests that its direct influence on job performance is less significant in comparison to the impacts of organisational justice and employment security. As it supports employee well-being, banks should align these initiatives with a special emphasis on fairness and job stability. In practical terms, this implies that post-merger strategies should prioritise the establishment of fair system, assurance of job security, and clear communication of these initiatives to employees. Such actions are likely to result in more substantial enhancements in job performance and overall organisational efficacy. By aligning their integration strategies with these insights, public sector banks can more effectively navigate the complexities of mergers and acquisitions and attain more favourable outcomes. The outcomes of the research provide significant insights for top-level administrators of public sector banks, particularly concerning the practices which have influence on employees' job performance in the context of M&As.

For top-level administrators, this indicates a pressing necessity to address the elements of organisational ethics that employees perceive unfavourably. By comprehending and alleviating the underlying causes of these nagative perceptions, administrators can improve overall employee performance and engagement. The research posits that they should proactively evaluate and rectify any concerns related to equity, transparency, and support within the organisation to cultivate a more favourable work environment. Therefore, addressing these ethical issues can contribute in enhancing employee morale and productivity, ultimately resulting in improved organisational performance and a more smooth integration process during M&As.

7. Directions for future research

Future investigations may expand upon this research by delving into several pivotal domains to enhance comprehension of the nexus between ethical practices and job performance. The examination of the longitudinal effects of ethical practices, investigating how their influence on job performance changes over time after M&As. Moreover, subsequent studies could concentrate on specific facets of ethical practices, such as the various forms of organisational justice or components within caring practices to ascertain their effects on job performance. Furthermore, juxtaposing these findings across different cultural contexts would prove beneficial, as it could elucidate whether the outcomes observed in Indian public sector banks is consistent in other sectors also. Finally, investigating the influence of leadership in cultivating and exemplifying ethical behaviour could yield pragmatic recommendations on how to effectively foster ethical practices that increase job performance. These investigative pathways could furnish a more holistic perspective on how ethical practices affect organisational outcomes, thereby offering insights for managers and policymakers. Future researches may analyse the viewpoint of employees on interactional, procedural and distributive justice, and other practices like integrity, honesty, openness, respect, fairness, responsibility. The soft issues like communication problems, low morale and motivation, conflicts and disputes, work life balance, unclear expectations *etc.*, faced by employees due to unethical conduct at the workplace, which may influence the job performance of employees, may also be examined. Examining the relationship of interactional, procedural and distributive justice separately and employment/job security with job performance by using PLS-SEM will also give an edge to future researcher. Further, the impact of organisational justice, caring practices employment security on job performance can also be explored in other service sectors of the economy.

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